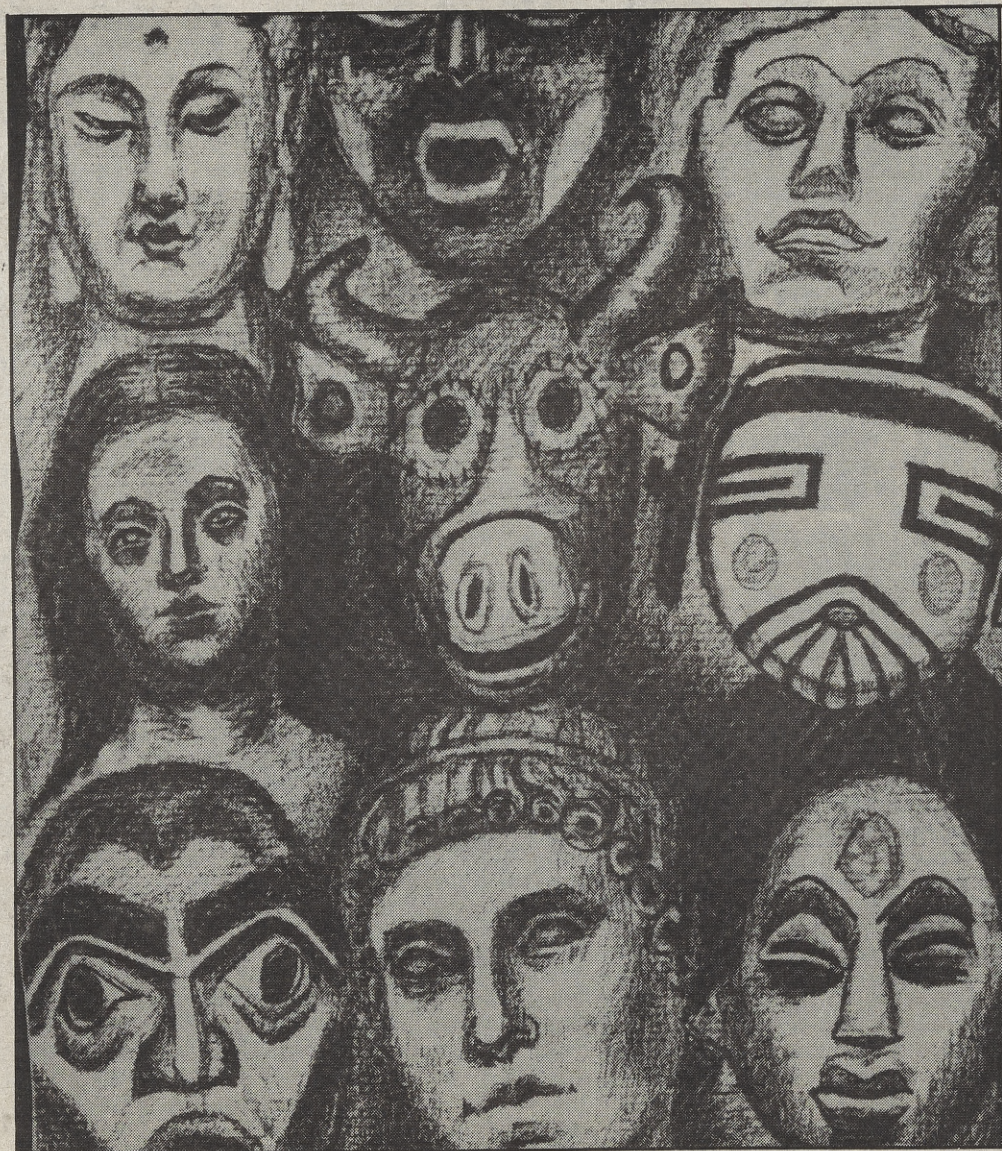


California: A look at how we got here

Page A-3—REGISTER-PAJARONIAN, Watsonville, Calif., Thursday, July 15, 1993



This drawing by V. Sulski shows the many faces of 'California Heritage: Our Roots Entwined' at the Pajaro Valley Gallery.

By DICK BENNETT
ART WRITER

WHAT IS it like to be a Californian?

The question that Vicky Sulski asked herself has resulted in a unique and provocative exhibit, "California Heritage: Our Roots Entwined." Organized and sponsored by the Monterey Bay Women's Caucus for Art and presented by the Pajaro Valley Arts Council, the exhibit is at the Pajaro Valley Gallery at 37 Sudden St., and features the work of 27 artists.

"We think differently," says Sulski, who coordinated the exhibit for the Women's Caucus. "I wanted to show how California affects us. So many cultures have arrived here in waves of immigration."

Each culture appropriates ideas, symbols and style from the others. The Californians with European or East Coast background are not the same as other Americans with the same heritage. Hispanic Californians may still use the Spanish language, but they are no longer Mexicans.

The idea of the exhibit, which was not limited to women artists, was to explore the roots of our cultural heritage. Thirty-nine artists entered the juried competition.

The juror, Sylvia Rios-Metcalf, selected work from 27 of the artists. The result is a rich and diverse show of painting, drawing, ceramics and sculpture in

which both style and media are "mixed."

The work approaches the question of re-exploring our roots in a deep and philosophic way. "Keeper of the Door," by Ginny Lenoir Spratt, is a small bronze figure clothed in leather and wearing turquoise jewelry that recalls the Southwestern Native American cultures.

"Blowing the Hair Off My Face," by Susana Arias, a mask of fired clay, polychromed, with hair of unraveled steel cable, takes a whimsical look, while Tom Wolver's "Heart of the Buffalo" and "She Who Flies" is fired clay in the new Native American style.

An unusual mix of mask, hair and bone called "Horse Fetishe" by Oma recalls our spiritual affinity to the animal that brought us here.

Nancy Fredrick's "Fossil Eggs" is a remarkable entry — the origins of our origins expressed in bronze and sand.

Some of the other artists include Elizabeth Reid, Mary Warshaw, Jim Aschbacher, Carmen Leon and Elizabeth Williams.

The exhibit is not a "historical" show, with old buildings and folks in costume. It represents a penetrating and insightful look at how we've become who we are.

The exhibit continues through Aug. 20 at Pajaro Valley Gallery, 37 Sudden St., Watsonville. The gallery is open Wednesday through Saturday from noon to 4 p.m., and admission is free.